

CHRISTIANITY and CRISIS

A Christian Journal of Opinion

Rockefeller and Nuclear Tests

Just as the Geneva conference on nuclear tests is reconvening Governor Rockefeller speaks in favor of a unilateral resumption by the United States of underground nuclear tests. This is most unfortunate. It will encourage the strong elements in the Pentagon and in the AEC that have long been opposed to a cessation of tests even with inspection. Further it may constitute a threat to the Administration which has held its ground against powerful forces within the government.

Underground tests may seem innocent enough because they do not cause fall-out. Presumably they are designed to perfect tactical weapons rather than to prepare the way for more destructive ones. But at this moment, when there is more hope of an agreement with Russia on methods of inspection in relation to all types of nuclear tests than there has been at any time, it would be tragic if the Administration were led to weaken its resolve to move toward an agreement on nuclear tests with inspection. Such an agreement has some chance of being a first step toward disarmament, a breaking of the stalemate over inspection.

Governor Rockefeller's position on this matter belongs to a whole pattern of thought that has long been urged upon the nation by very powerful minds, notably by Dr. Henry Kissinger who is one of Governor Rockefeller's chief advisors. Kissinger's book, *Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy*, is so able that it almost casts a spell over the reader until he has had time to have some second thoughts about its argument. The argument finally depends upon Kissinger's confidence in the pos-

sibility, even the probability, of being able to have limited nuclear wars. There are many people who believe in the necessity of being prepared for limited war and who yet doubt that we can expect to limit a nuclear war.

If the United States should prove to be shaky in its support of an agreement to ban all nuclear tests, it is highly doubtful that it will be possible to agree on a ban on tests above ground. The probable result would be a return to uncontrolled testing but with the addition of other powers engaged in testing. There is surely no national security in an uncontrolled arms race based upon testing by a growing number of powers. We would also return to the old callous arguments that make light of the effects of fall-out because while there would be many victims in absolute terms, these would be only a small percentage of the total number of people in the many generations affected.

If we should unilaterally renew nuclear testing at this time, it would prove to the world that whether or not the Russians mean business on the question of disarmament the United States does not. It would once more cast us in the role of the nation that is the real threat to peace and weaken the appeal of the things for which we stand in much of the world. It is unfortunate that Governor Rockefeller, of all people, should be the one to carry this banner because every other aspect of his record and personality gives many of us confidence in his leadership.

J. C. B.

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DE GAULLE ON SUMMITRY

WALTER LIPPMANN has pointed to General Charles de Gaulle as the only remaining Western leader who thinks and acts in the classic pattern. He is associated by many with great leaders of the past who in timing and program towered above their contemporaries. De Gaulle's approach to diplomacy must therefore be taken seriously, irritating and disturbing as it may be to London and Washington.

What are the reasons for his adamant stand on high level talks with the Russians? Why is he stubbornly opposed to an early meeting with Premier Khrushchev? Four factors have been put forward to account for French policy on negotiating with the Russians.

The first relates to General de Gaulle's conception of diplomacy. Diplomacy is to him a classic art as is the task of statesmanship. The political leader within the national arena must balance and weigh each sentence in his public statements. For this reason de Gaulle has no appetite for frequent and repeated press conferences in which issues of great moment are treated off the cuff. His September declaration on Algeria came after long silence and he seemed to measure the "specific density" of every phrase.

In high level negotiations the statesman has the duty of projecting broad lines of policy or of ratifying specific agreements arrived at from a lower level of discussions. If working diplomats fail to settle on questions of detail, the chief executives at the summit can scarcely resume and accomplish this task. Summitry without adequate preparation leads to improvisation, *ad hoc* solutions and ill-advised steps by great men too preoccupied to achieve mastery over the details.

In the recently published third and final volume of his memoirs, *Salut* (Salvation), de Gaulle criticizes both Churchill and Roosevelt for failure in this realm. The giants cannot in a few days accomplish solutions that have not yielded to many months of exchange at more appropriate levels. Ironically, de Gaulle, the strongest Western leader, is most sensitive to this limitation!

A second factor that doubtless influences de Gaulle is the substantial number of unsolved problems that plague his regime as they have every French Government before him. Algeria heads the list of nearly insoluble issues that restrict France's

influence in the councils of state. Moreover, this problem for almost the first time in its long and melancholy history gives signs of improvement.

In the Middle East and North Africa, moderate forces like Bourguiba in Tunisia and the King of Morocco have gained new strength and influence. At the same time other forces that have not always stood for moderation, like Nasser's Egypt, have worked overtime behind the scenes to bring about a solution. Egypt's leader now recognizes that continued instability and strife provide conditions on which extremist elements can feed. With the image of Iraq before him, Nasser cannot support a situation that might benefit leftist and Communist elements.

The presumption then is that de Gaulle, standing on the threshold of some form of limitation of the Algerian conflict, is hesitant to set aside at this time the tangible hopes of peace in North Africa for the speculative gains of negotiations at the summit. The complicated nature of possible discussions with the Algerians heightens the need for de Gaulle's full concentration.

He cannot talk directly with the FLN any more than Arabs or Jews could afford to negotiate directly in the Palestine crisis. Like the Protestants and Catholics of an earlier day who could negotiate only by maintaining the pretense that they were not negotiating and who carried on all their conversation through third party intermediaries, the French must find a way to pursue discussions without any appearance of recognizing the rebels.

A third factor that is often cited as responsible for the toughness of de Gaulle's position is his hope of forming a new center of leadership within the Western world. Both Adenauer and de Gaulle have a stake in the *status quo* of West Germany and West Berlin. Both have been less disposed to consider hypothetical solutions put forth as means of relieving present tensions. Both have memories of Stalinism and are deeply skeptical that Soviet policy has entered a new era.

Above all, by virtue of their countries' recovery and the force of their individual personalities, both can claim to speak for something more than a second-class power. Yet in the end each lacks the means of guaranteeing the security of his country against Soviet aggression. Only the U.S. possesses the deterrent power on which their security must depend. However, in the absence of more aggres-

sive American leadership, the French and German claims must be taken seriously.

The fourth and final factor is de Gaulle's determination that France shall have thermonuclear weapons. The Sahara tests are planned for sometime in February; if the summit meeting can be delayed until spring, France will enter the council room on equal footing with the other nuclear powers. Nuclear capacity has become the symbol of a great power and de Gaulle is reluctant to test his position in negotiations until he has achieved this status.

Some or all of the assumptions on which de

Gaulle's approach to summitry appears founded may be false. As the great man passionately attached to the historical he may misjudge the currents of present-day world affairs; he may also exaggerate the classic patterns of diplomacy and the chances of a dramatic solution that he and his peers would have only to ratify if the preparations were sound. But right or wrong, de Gaulle reflects an approach and a personality in world politics that must be understood and dealt with if peace is to be achieved in the end.

K. W. T.

The Obsolescence of Ethics

IT WILL BE an interesting matter for later historians to determine the precise point at which ethics became obsolete in our Western culture. Whatever may be the answer to that question, we may be sure that the researchers will be entertained as they discover the way in which Protestant theology helped toward the obsolescence of ethics.

The start of the modern movement would appear to lie with secular sources. Darwin with his natural selection, Einstein with his relativity, Sumner with his folkways, Ruth Benedict with her diverse and contradictory patterns of culture, and even the historians with their abandonment of moral law in human events: all converge in assisting a creeper-crawler approach of relativism in ethics that soon becomes so absolute that after a while there is no longer any ethics on hand to be relativized.

The fact is that we today live in an age when ethics is becoming obsolete. It is superseded by science, deleted by psychology, dismissed as emotive by philosophy; it is drowned in compassion, evaporates into aesthetics and retreats before relativism. The most dramatic proof of its irrelevance to our society is the fact that even the rebels against society disdain to appeal to it.

Historically the rebel has not only been opposed to something but he has also been ardently in favor of something—a principle, an ideal, a cause. But the modern rebel is a rebel without a cause. This is just as true of the political hipster like Senator McCarthy—so Richard Rovere argues—as it is of the bohemian hipster that we call a beat-

nik. How, indeed, can you really be a rebel in a relativistic society in which there is nothing fixed against which you can really rebel? And what is the point of being a rebel in behalf of something when anything or everything is permitted anyway?

The Ploy of the Compassionate Heart

The most general popular device for the dissolution of moral standards, however, lies in what might be called the ploy of the compassionate heart. For instance: in Boston a distinguished actress explains why she plays Lady Macbeth as a warm, feminine and sympathetic character. Says she: "I feel people should have compassion for the sinners of the world."

In Berkeley a young mother who has been on a three-month sex binge with five different lovers in a total of eighteen verified instances of adultery receives help from the judge. The real fault would appear to lie with the lady's husband, an instructor in chemistry, who is "cold and scientific" and "definitely not humanistic." The young mother is relieved of the responsibility for her two children, is allowed to keep the nice home that she purchased in the original settlement with the estranged husband, and is allotted \$200 a month until she gets settled emotionally. Says the judge: she is "more to be pitied than censured."

These two episodes, occurring almost simultaneously in widely separated parts of this country, illustrate the way ethics today can be submerged in a sea of indiscriminate compassion. The usual moral distinctions are simply drowned in a maudlin emotion in which we have more feeling for the murderer than for the murdered, for the adul-

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terer than for the betrayed; and in which we gradually begin to believe that the really guilty party, the one who somehow caused it all, is the victim, not the perpetrator, of the crime. As for the two children who are caught in the strife between the parents, why should we worry about them?—they have not yet that capacity for significant sinfulness which alone can arouse our deepest compassion.

What most concerns me at the moment, however, is neither the popular symptom nor the secular-philosophic-scientific manifestation of the contemporary trend. Rather it is the way in which Protestant theology is making a contribution to this development. For a well acculturated Christianity that is abreast of the times will know how to collaborate creatively with any movement of action or of thought that represents the latest thing in progress. If ethics is on the way out, surely we can help with a shove in the right direction. Here let us note six trends in Protestant culture and theology that assist in the obsolescence of ethics.

One device—which has a direct kinship with the ploy of the compassionate heart—is that of the Christian sentimentalist who makes an unrestricted celebration of the sacredness of personality. I was actually present at one conference of Christian youth (and I do *not* invent this tale) when a young man stood up and protested the Ten Commandments on the grounds that they were commandments and as such violated the sanctity of his selfhood. What has happened here is that the permissive, non-directive approach, with its Pelagian assumptions, has crept out of counseling into ethics so that all God dares to do is to be, but not to give orders. Actually the deity is already far from our consideration in this context. The self is most occupied in affirming its independence of (a) things and of (b) principles, in an effort to establish a free society of pure persons.

A second device is the exact opposite of the first. As the first subordinates all principle to the sanctity of the self, so the second obliterates all principle before the holiness of God. Indeed, in Otto's well known treatment of the *mysterium tremendum* of the deity, there is no mention whatsoever of the ethical aspects of God. The deity now becomes so transcendent that he transcends even his own laws and commandments. In moral matters his conduct takes on the character of utter unpredictability and irrationality. We may be privileged, at a moment, to have a prophet of the Lord who can inform us that now we are instructed to resist Nazism, or that now we are in-

structed to go easy on communism. But any coherent pattern of a divine moral order has disappeared in pure caprice.

For Depravity, Lyricism; For Respectability, Contempt

A third device is that of the Christian sophisticate. His big business is the attack on Puritanism and on bourgeois morality. Except for his zeal and self-righteousness we could be tempted to call him a Christian beatnik. Presumably this fellow takes off from somewhere in Reinhold Niebuhr, but he has now traveled a long way out of sight of his master. His chief trick is that of translating "simple moralism" into "simple morality" and of unloading on the latter all the opprobrium that belongs to the former.

The initial attack on "simple moralism" was an attack on the failure to reckon with the radical sinfulness of man and with the complex and equivocal character of the alternatives actually available in social action. The attack on "simple morality" carries the same emotional vehemence into a resentment against any form of conduct that is not properly stained with sin and wobbly with ambiguity. More than this, in his contempt for respectability the Christian sophisticate almost turns partisan of wrong-doing, grows lyrical over depravity, and only in the depths of corruption and despair can he ever discern any working of the grace of God.

A fourth device, and a highly respectable one, is that of the Christian scholar. This might be labeled the "*gründlich* approach." The intent here is to dig below ethics to its foundations. One goes back to the Bible, back to church history, back to the great saints and prophets and teachers of the past, not to get anything so ephemeral as the explicit ethical principles but to explore the rich soil of spirituality out of which those principles have come. This approach finds expression in a textbook of readings in Christian ethics where so much attention is given to the foundation in faith that the superstructure in specific principles for politics, economics and the family is scarcely indicated. Indeed, we are so careful to probe what lies below the surface that we have no energy to encourage what begins below the ground to get above the ground.

A fifth device, most brilliantly and persuasively stated by Joseph Sittler, is that of the theologian of faith. Any effort to articulate a clean-cut program in

politics or in economics is viewed with suspicion as a desire to return to salvation by works. The teachings of Jesus are celebrated as "non-legislative," "system-disintegrating" and "principle-transcending." We are reminded of the "uncalculated style" of our Lord, of his "occasional lightning flashes and gull-like swoops," and are urged, presumably, to go and do likewise in the power of faith. (What an extraordinary spectacle it was, in recent years, to watch a distinguished American Secretary of State conduct our foreign policy in the "uncalculated style," with "occasional lightning flashes" and with "gull-like swoops"!)

Normative for the Christian should be "a faith active in love which cracks all rabbinical patterns, transcends every statutory solidification of duty, breaks out of all systematic schematizations of the good."

An equally romantic passion for spontaneity would appear to be part of a sixth device. This is peculiar to a group of Christian social philosophers and is variously illustrated in the writings of James Gustafson, Paul Lehmann, and Albert Rasmussen. Here the emphasis is contextual and points to the Christian *koinonia*, since it is "from and in the *koinonia* that we get the clue to what the will of God is." One might call this an ethic of Christian togetherness.

Such an ethic rejects the old-fashioned way—exemplified in many writings of John Bennett—of first defining the insights of biblical and Christian faith and of then applying them to the ethically ambiguous situation. Instead there is an insistence on the relativism of life in faith and in fellowship. So far as there are any moral principles, we must remember their concrete and contextual character and must make sure, above all, that they are internalized in persons. The Christian person, like the Christian God, is a living person, and as such his free behavior preponderates over his more regular and habitual conduct.

The Question of a Moral Law

Now let me make it quite clear, with reference to all six of these devices and even with reference to the secular symptoms, that I am neither saying nor intimating that they are intrinsically evil or erroneous. Compassion is a virtue. Persons are sacred. God is holy. Goodness is more than respectability. Scholarship should be *gründlich*. Works are derivatives of faith. Our context is the Christian *koinonia*. All of these things have a place and a proportion in the total Christian perspective and program.

Moreover, it is obvious that there are differences between the several dispositions which for purposes of this inquiry I have lumped together. The difference is tremendous between the sentimentalists of the self and the apostles of a transcendent god. The differences are more subtle, intricate and equivocal if we compare the various teachers of contextualism and of *sola-fide*-ism. And doubtless within this framework there is a considerable area of legitimate activity for those who are concerned in one place to split a hair, in another to bridge a chasm.

Nevertheless, as E. Clinton Gardner has argued in an admirable essay in the Spring 1959 issue of *Religion in Life*, we still confront the critical question of a moral law. For it is incontestable that all six of the Christian devices of which I have spoken share a common distrust of moral principles. In one way or another they are radically antinomian. They all claim to be very much interested in conduct, but at precisely the point at which conduct threatens to take an unequivocal definition they draw back recalcitrant.

The sacred self dispenses with principles as does the holy God. The Christian scholar and the Christian theologian want to get under them and behind them. The social philosophers want to internalize them and to contextualize them. For none of these thinkers may the ethical reality be allowed, in Sittler's phrase, to "extrude" or to "dwindle" into particular counsels, precepts, duties. In brief, Christian ethics is a good thing until it becomes distinctively ethical.

And now let us return to Boston and to Berkeley, to Darwin and Einstein and Sumner and Benedict. It all adds up to a noble company, does it not? But if all appear to be active in the effort to obliterate ethics, we must remember that each one, whether of sacred or of secular origins, does the job in his own unique and inimitable way.

The sentimentalist buries morals in a mud-bath of maudlin compassion. The analytic philosopher assists by proving that it is all emotive anyway. The psychotherapist and the sociologist carefully skirt the use of ethical categories. The theologian puts morals out of sight by burying them under ground, by elevating them to the skies, or by dissipating them into the self or into society. The sophisticate views the whole affair with contempt. And the respectable chap, even when he conforms, is at heart a cultural relativist. All conspire to a common end—that ethics should become obsolete.

CORRESPONDENCE

Gratitude, Disappointment, Despair

TO THE EDITORS: As one of the Catholics who wrote on Protestant-Catholic problems for the June 8 issue of *Christianity and Crisis*, I have been greatly interested in the Protestant comments that have subsequently appeared. My reactions to them have ranged from gratitude through disappointment to a kind of exasperated despair. Dr. Henry Van Dusen ("American Catholicism: Grounds for Misgivings," Aug. 3) and Mr. Robert Schlager (Correspondence, Oct. 5) have raised questions that cannot be evaded in any serious discussion: hence my gratitude. They have also, I think, failed to take adequate account of some of the major intellectual and spiritual movements within modern Catholicism: hence my disappointment. But Mr. Stanley Lowell, I fear, is not the least bit interested in "dialogue"; his concern is to score debaters' points: hence my exasperation and my despair of any significant communication between Catholics and that school of their critics which Mr. Lowell so vigorously represents.

Dialogue involves men talking *together* in an effort to discover a basis for agreement; its very antithesis is men sniping at each other in an attempt to uncover each other's weaknesses. Mr. Lowell is an accomplished sniper and, as such, does the Catholic community some service merely by reminding it of the deep distrust many Americans continue to feel for the "Roman Church." But this service has nothing to do with "dialogue," and I would suggest that Mr. Lowell carry on his arguments not with those Catholics who write for *Christianity and Crisis* or *The Commonweal*, but with the editors of, say, *The Brooklyn Tablet*, which represents that type of Catholic intransigence that POAU confuses with the whole Church. Indeed, *The Brooklyn Tablet* and POAU seem made for each other because if it were not for the one, what would the other find to talk about?

What strikes me most forcefully about the approach of POAU to the problems (and there are problems) of Catholicism and the liberal society is its lack of any historical sense, its sublime disregard for complexity, its simplistic *literalness*. For example, in his latest letter to *Christianity and Crisis* (November 2) Mr. Lowell seems to demand that the Pope sign some kind of affidavit swearing that he "believes" in religious liberty. He writes: "If the Pope does indeed believe in liberty of all faiths, why doesn't he just say so? That would settle the matter and we wouldn't have to have all this pull and haul over what the Church does or does not teach on this point."

Now, really! One would think that the Church of Rome were some sectarian movement trying to get off the Attorney General's list. No recognition of historical complexities or doctrinal subtleties deepens Mr. Lowell's view. It is as though a thousand years of history had never been: all the Pope has to do is "just say so." As for the fact that the question of religious liberty is one of the most discussed theological problems in Catholicism today

and that, as Dr. John C. Bennett reports in the same issue of *Christianity and Crisis*, for every one book by a Catholic that defends the "traditional" view of religious liberty, ten have recently been published defending religious freedom as "thesis"—these developments are ignored too.

I am thus, reluctantly, forced to return to what I wrote to the editors of this journal (October 27, 1958): "Here we see the reason why most Catholics despair of any rational discussion with those who hold [Mr. Lowell's] views . . . They will *insist* that the Catholic Church is a simple, forever frozen authoritarian phenomenon, incapable of historical adaptation or self-criticism, no matter how impressive the evidence to the contrary may be. The historic ferment and developments in modern Catholic thought are dismissed (if anything is known about them) as atypical or even hypocritical. For how could it be otherwise in a Church which is 'monolithic'? Period."

Dr. Van Dusen clearly shares some of Mr. Lowell's misgivings about "official" Catholic teaching on Church-State relations and also some of Mr. Lowell's distrust of Catholic intentions in the American society. But Dr. Van Dusen's statement is (if I may use the word without sounding patronizing) serious. He is quite aware of the division within Catholicism on the issue of religious liberty; he knows that this is not a simple question of the Pope's "just saying so," but that it is, rather, a most delicate matter of historical development and doctrinal evolution. He asks, however, whether the "liberal" Catholic position is fated to be a permanent minority position, whether the "traditional" view is somehow at the core of Catholic thought.

Dr. Van Dusen's question is perfectly legitimate and I do not think any Catholic can reasonably object to his asking it. I am very interested in asking it myself. But I do not think Dr. Van Dusen's answer—that the official "line" is steadily more reactionary—is supported by the facts. Indeed, I think the very opposite is true. It is here that I believe Dr. Van Dusen fails to take sufficient account of some of the most significant developments in contemporary Catholic thought. As a "liberal" Catholic (I don't like the phrase but I guess I'm burdened with it) I find these developments encouraging.

Those of us who hold the "liberal" view of religious freedom do not think of ourselves as a

In Our Next Issue

REINHOLD NIEBUHR writes about the long haul of coexistence.

"There have never been purely ethical solutions for the collective relations of mankind in which an equilibrium of power is always the prerequisite of justice and justice, rather than sacrificial love, is the norm. There are of course valid Christian approaches and insights for living in the perils and assuming the burdens of a nuclear age."

beleaguered minority within Catholicism's authoritarian citadel. We are convinced, rather (and all the evidence supports us), that we are participating—however insignificantly, personally—in a major adaptation of Catholic thought to the realities—and the truths—of our age. I cannot think of a single major Catholic thinker of the twentieth century who does not support the “liberal” view of religious freedom, and the “official” pronouncements of the recent Popes have been clearly, however cautiously, moving in this direction. And one now hears that a re-examination of religious tolerance will be one of the major questions before the forthcoming ecumenical council. Rome moves slowly but it does move.

But important as the evaluation of “liberal” and “conservative” influence in the Church may be, I think that to examine the problem only in these terms is to fail to see Catholicism. And here, I believe, I find my disagreement with Dr. Van Dusen much more fundamental than over the question of which group is currently “ahead.” Dr. Van Dusen's approach to Catholicism strikes me as hopelessly mechanistic. We might count “liberals” and “conservatives” forever and still miss the real point, which is that the Church of Rome is a living, complex organism that cannot be understood through such easy formulas as Dr. Van Dusen employs. At any given time it is probably *both* liberal and conservative, and throughout its life there runs a continuing dialectic between opposing, often contradictory, approaches to the world. Because, in its journey through time, the Church is not divorced from history or from history's contradictions. In all that is non-essential to the Revelation that was once and for all delivered to the Apostles the Church argues, learns, progresses (or regresses) and adapts in every age.

Thus in our century Catholic thought has moved away from a kind of rationalism, and it is this fact I think Mr. Schlager fails to appreciate in his valuable and generous letter. Mr. Schlager thinks that “the Roman Catholic persists in seeing religion as a question of philosophy . . . a ‘tour de force’ of the mind whereby you prove the existence of God, the authority of the Church and the Pope as well as the rest of Catholic doctrine.” But this, I think, represents a corruption of Catholic intellectualism that is seldom encountered in Catholic theology today, where the *mystery* of faith is everywhere emphasized. In the classical Catholic tradition philosophy is the handmaid of theology not its mistress, and those Catholic apologists who seem to reverse this order betray the Sacred Science.

Even in faith we know God as the Unknown, and to be grasped in faith *is* to be grasped in mystery. These are truths that modern Christianity—both Catholic and Protestant—emphasizes increasingly. And I am grateful to Mr. Schlager for reminding us of them again.

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Existentialism: Sign of the Future

TO THE EDITORS: I must take sharp exception with the two clear definitions of the Roman Catholic-Protestant cleavage that have been presented recently. Mr. Clancy described this (“A Roman Catholic View of American Protestantism,” June 8) as the opposition between primacy of the intellect and primacy of the will—thus casting it into the terms of a Thomistic realm of thought I cannot accept. Mr. Schlager (“A Response to Mr. Clancy,” October 5) neatly characterized it as the opposition of Intellect and Experience of the Holy Spirit—which splits man far beyond possibility of recovery.

And so it seems to me that the basic problem between orthodox Protestantism and orthodox Roman Catholicism is that of two mutually contradictory realms of discourse. Roman Catholicism rests, ultimately, on the idea of truth as a conceptually known and timeless pattern. Protestantism has tended to think of truth as given in a highly emotional and unique individual experience. As both versions of Christianity have developed from these roots into their modern expressions, it is difficult to see a single point at which the two realms correspond (I except Protestant scholasticism from this as being a legalistic and anti-rational adaptation of its Roman counterpart).

What interests me much more than this, however, is the extent to which this split has been overcome by the tendency of some thinkers in both faiths toward existentialism. This way of looking at life itself has odd religious antecedents. Its grounds were laid by the Church Father most respected on both sides of the fence (Augustine); it was given its first modern expression by a Roman Catholic more admired by Protestants (Pascal), and reached articulateness in a Protestant well-liked by Roman Catholics (Kierkegaard). And the four contemporary thinkers it has most influenced—Barth and Tillich, Marcel and Maritain—seem to differ less across the line than among themselves.

If I may play the game of paradox a moment more, this philosophical orientation is the apex of rationalism and the destruction of rationalism; the distinct product of bourgeois individualism and the destruction of most bourgeois values; and a crass distortion of experience while at the same time the most relevant contemporary understanding of this same experience.

In short, I am suggesting that existentialism, because it cannot be located in any of the categories of the past, is the first sign of the future of Christian theology. And I am further suggesting that only in so far as both Protestants and Roman Catholics follow where it leads will there ever be a mutual understanding that is not mutual self-deception.

(THE REV.) CLAY B. CARR, JR.
Richmond, Va.

CHURCH NEWS AND NOTES

Suspension of Nuclear Tests

In August 1959 the Executive Committee of the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs of the World Council of Churches meeting in Spittal, Austria and the Central Committee of the World Council meeting in Rhodes, Greece addressed themselves to the present situation in an effort to achieve agreement on the cessation of tests. They formally adopted statements the relevant parts of which are here quoted:

"The World Council of Churches has at various times urged the cessation of nuclear weapons testing with the provision for international inspection and control, notably in Statements on Atomic Tests and Disarmament adopted at New Haven in 1957. . . . On reaffirming these former statements in all their present relevance, we now as members of the Central Committee call attention to certain matters which we consider immediately urgent.

"We urge the powers not to resume tests unilaterally, in order that statesmen may have time to achieve agreements and the international situation may not deteriorate. A treaty to cease all tests—atmosphere, space and underground—should be urgently sought not least since it will represent the beginning of specific controls, may lead to measures of disarmament verified by international inspection and control, and will help to eliminate dreaded risks to health.

"Tests for peaceful purposes or for more certainly identifying possible underground explosions should henceforth be under international control.

In particular, so long as international control is under discussion, powers which have not made tests as yet should not launch them anywhere for military purposes.

"We affirm that no nation is justified in deciding on its own responsibility to conduct weapons tests when the people of other nations who have not given their consent may have to bear the consequences. Therefore, we call upon each nation contemplating tests to give full recognition to this moral responsibility as well as to considerations of national defense and international security."

Church Rejects Dibelius' Views

Berlin—The management of the Evangelical Church of Berlin-Brandenburg has formally dissociated itself from a recent statement by Bishop Otto Dibelius, head of the church, in which he denied that Christians owe allegiance in the biblical sense to the East German Republic or any other totalitarian state.

In a statement issued following discussions at which Bishop Dibelius himself presided, the leaders reaffirmed support of a resolution of the All-German Synod of 1956 which describes the state as "under the gracious ordinance of God, independent of how the state is established and of its political form."

It added that "the command of the Bible to obey the supreme authority remains valid also with regard to the existing governments, although this obedience does not exclude a spiritual contradiction wherever the honor of God and man is at stake."

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